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260824Z Oct 01

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DS-00	FBIE-00
	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00
	NSAE-00	TEST-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/003W

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4515
INFO AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
NSC WASHDC
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS HANOI 002812

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: PARTY OFFICIAL OPTIMISTIC ON BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

11. (U) SUMMARY: A SENIOR COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM (CPV)
FOREIGN RELATIONS OFFICIAL, BUI THE GIANG, EMPHASIZED THE
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POSITIVE IN THE US-VIETNAM BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN AN
OCTOBER 24 COURTESY CALL WITH CHARGE. HE PREDICTED THAT
MORE PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES WOULD PROVE EFFECTIVE IN
OVERCOMING LINGERING TENSIONS AND BITTERNESS. HE WARMLY
THANKED CHARGE FOR THE EMBASSY'S USD 35,000 CONTRIBUTION TO
THE VIETNAM RED CROSS' FLOOD RELIEF PROGRAM. GIANG
INDICATED THAT PASSAGE OF THE BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT WAS
ONE OF TWO TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY NEXT
MONTH. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) BUI THE GIANG, DIRECTOR OF THE PEOPLE TO PEOPLE
RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF THE CPV CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S
COMMISSION FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS, MET WITH CHARGE DURING A
COURTESY CALL AT CPV HEADQUARTERS. HE DESCRIBED THE THREE
DIMENSIONS OF VIETNAM'S FOREIGN RELATIONS AS STATE-TO-STATE,
PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE, AND PARTY-TO-PARTY, WITH THE MFA, THE
VIETNAM UNION OF FRIENDSHIP ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE PARTY
COMMISSION FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS RESPECTIVELY RESPONSIBLE.
GIANG SAID THAT HE AND HIS STAFF OF EIGHT, AS
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONLY PARTY, "ADVISE" AND COORDINATE
THE ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLES' GROUPS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH
FOREIGN COUNTERPARTS. ASIDE FROM HANDLING TRADITIONAL
RELATIONS WITH OTHER COMMUNIST PARTIES, GIANG EXPLAINED WHEN
ASKED, THAT THE CPV HAS RELATIONSHIPS WITH RULING PARTIES IN
MANY COUNTRIES, CITING JAPAN'S LDP AND MALAYSIA'S UMNO AMONG
OTHERS. HE SAID THAT BOTH MAJOR U.S. PARTIES HAD DECLINED
CPV INQUIRIES ABOUT OPENING RELATIONS ON THE GROUNDS THAT
THEY DO NOT HAVE FORMAL RELATIONS WITH ANY OVERSEAS
POLITICAL PARTIES.

13. (SBU) WHEN ASKED ABOUT BTA RATIFICATION ISSUES, GIANG
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ANSWERED THAT RATIFICATION "DEPENDS ON DEVELOPMENTS,"
PRESUMABLY REFERRING PRIMARILY TO THE FATE OF THE VIETNAM
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT IN THE US SENATE. GIANG ECHOED CPV GENERAL
SECRETARY NONG DUC MANH'S REMARKS EARLIER THIS WEEK THAT THE

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S TOP TWO PRIORITIES FOR ITS UPCOMING
SESSION ARE THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND THE
BTA. GIANG SAID THAT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WOULD CAREFULLY
STUDY THE BTA SINCE IT IS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT
VIETNAM HAS EVER UNDERTAKEN. WITHOUT EXPLICITLY SAYING THAT
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WOULD PASS THE BTA, HE SAID THAT THE
PRESIDENT WOULD AFTERWARD SIGN IT WITHOUT DELAY.

14. (SBU) DIRECTOR GIANG EMPHASIZED THE POSITIVE IN THE
BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, WARMLY THANKING CHARGE FOR THE
EMBASSY'S USD 35,000 CONTRIBUTION TO THE VIETNAM RED CROSS
FOR MEKONG RIVER FLOOD VICTIMS EARLIER IN THE DAY. HE

POINTED OUT LANGUAGE IN THE NATIONAL POLICY SETTING REPORT OF THIS YEAR'S NINTH NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS THAT "VIETNAM IS READY TO BE A FRIEND AND PARTNER WITH ALL COUNTRIES," CONTRASTING IT WITH THE SEVENTH CPV CONGRESS'S 1991 REPORT IN WHICH VIETNAM "WISHED TO BE A FRIEND OF ALL COUNTRIES." ACCORDING TO GIANG, THIS MEANS THAT VIETNAM IS MATURE ENOUGH AND PREPARED TO BE A FRIEND AND PARTNER TO COUNTRIES "INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES." HE EXPRESSED A BELIEF THAT WHILE THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP HAS ITS UPS AND DOWNS, THE OVERALL TREND IS UPWARD. NOTING HIS PERSONAL STAKE IN THE BTA, ACQUIRED THROUGH WORKING ON IT FOR SEVERAL YEARS, HE OFFERED HIS OFFICE AS A POINT OF CONTACT IN TIMES OF NEED.

15. (SBU) GIANG AND CHARGE DISCUSSED THE LINGERING
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BITTERNESS FELT BY SOME ON BOTH SIDES LEFT OVER FROM THE VIETNAM WAR. NOTING THAT THIS BITTERNESS IS A "CHRONIC IRRITANT" IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, GIANG SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES WERE QUITE EFFECTIVE IN OVERCOMING THESE OLD TENSIONS. HE CITED INSTANCES INVOLVING BOTH OVERSEAS VIETNAMESE AND "AGENT ORANGE VICTIMS" IN WHICH PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THEIR FORMER OPPONENTS FOES BROKE DOWN OLD HATREDS. GIANG CONTRASTED THE PATH OF U.S. RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM TO THOSE OF POST-WORLD WAR II GERMANY OR JAPAN, OBSERVING THAT IN THE US-VIETNAM CASE, PEOPLE TEND TO "CLING TO THE PAST." HOWEVER, HE TOOK A FAVORABLE VIEW OF US-VIETNAM RELATIONS IN THE LONG-TERM COMPARED WITH THOSE BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CHINA, CITING WHAT HE SAID WAS A FAVORITE SAYING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE: "HEY GUYS, WHEN THE WESTERNERS LEAVE, THE CHINESE WILL COME AGAIN."
PORTER

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